



West Midlands Combined Authority

Housing & Land Delivery Board

Wednesday 27 April 2022 at 10.00 am

Minutes

Present

Councillor Zahoor Ahmed
Chris Lawes
Dawn Ward

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
Coventry and Warwickshire LEP
Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local
Enterprise Partnership
City of Wolverhampton Council
Environment Agency

Councillor Stephen Simkins
Jim Davies

In Attendance

Item Title No.

47. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fitzgerald (Cannock Chase District Council), Councillor Gakhal (City of Wolverhampton Council), Councillor Hussain (Birmingham City Council), Sarah Middleton (Black Country LEP), Councillor Overton (Telford & Wrekin Council), Councillor Potter (Shropshire Council), Suzanne Ward (Environment Agency) and Councillor Welsh (Coventry City Council).

48. Nomination of Substitues

Councillor Simkins (City of Wolverhampton Council) attended the meeting on behalf of Councillor Gakhal and Jim Davies (Environment Agency) attended the meeting on behalf of Suzanne Ward.

49. Minutes - 2 March 2022

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2022 be approved as a correct record.

50. Quarterly Report on Housing & Land Portfolio Deliverables and Progress on Housing & Land Annual Business Plan

The board considered a report of the Strategic Planning Manager that provided a regular quarterly update on the progress to date in delivering the High Level Deliverables for the Housing and Land Portfolio.

The Executive Director of Housing and Regeneration, Gareth Bradford reported that a number of national companies have approached the WMCA to express an interest in working in the West Midlands at regional scale and it was hoped that strategic partnerships and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) would follow in due course that would be beneficial to the region.

Councillor Simkins considered the need to review the Single Commissioning Framework (SCF) so that projects could be delivered quicker for brownfield sites.

The Executive Director of Housing and Regeneration reported that some schemes require intervention and need much more flexibility. He advised that it was not the Single Commissioning Framework that was unlocking sites but the developer working with the WMCA and local authority to deploy Government funding. He added that the SCF has been subjected to a review by Internal Audit and was amended in 2020 for affordable housing and modular construction.

The Chair considered an analysis needs to be undertaken of sites that have stalled, the parties involved and the reasons for the delays so that lessons could be learnt. He asked that the Executive Director of Housing and Regeneration report back to the next meeting on sites that been stalled for 12 months or more.

The board noted the need for more Government money for land remediation of brownfield sites to meet housing targets especially in the Black Country due to its industrial heritage.

The Executive Director of Housing and Regeneration reported that the WMCA was seeking additional funding and flexibility of funding as part of the devolution deal.

Resolved:

1. The positive progress to achieve the Housing and Land Portfolio's approved Annual Deliverables in 2021/22 and the clear plans in place for progressing the agreed High Level Deliverables work programme during the remainder of 2022 be noted;
2. The key performance highlights set out in section 3 of the report be noted and
3. The positive performance and effective deployment of WMCA's Devolved Housing and Land funds, illustrated by the Single Commissioning Framework Schemes summarised in Annex 1 to this report (many of these schemes are now in delivery phase having progressed though the end to end SCF process which shows the role of the WMCA in unlocking, accelerating and problem solving on 'difficult to deliver' schemes) be noted.

51. Trailblazing Devolution Deal :Discussion Paper

The board considered a report of the Strategic Planning Manager that

provided an update on the implications of the Levelling Up White Paper published by Government in February 2022 and informed the board of potential devolution proposals for discussion between the WMCA and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) during the Summer of 2022.

The Strategic Planning Manager, Rob Lamond outlined the report including the proposals co-developed with the Housing and Land Delivery Steering Group for discussion. He advised that the WMCA was not looking to take powers away from local authorities but was seeking to create greater freedom and flexibilities across local authority areas for a joined-up approach.

The board considered the focus should include securing more affordable housing with powers for the region as well as CPO powers /land assembly, support for net zero/future homes, town centres and the public land charter, infrastructure powers for utilities and support for addressing the skills gaps.

Councillor Simkins felt that the WMCA should look to develop a regional policy to protect the green belt and have appropriate powers for this.

The Chair reported of the need for Government to make building on brownfield sites attractive.

The Executive Director Housing and Regeneration reported that he region did not have a brownfield regeneration strategy whereby brownfield sites are maximised over the green belt but could look to scope this work and provide feedback to a future meeting.

The Chair endorsed this approach.

Further to comments from Councillor Simkins and Ahmed regarding the need for a members group to look at the Devolution Deal, the Chair supported this proposal and asked for a members working group to be set up.

Resolved:

1. The positive announcements made as part of the Levelling Up White Paper regarding the additional funding for Brownfield Regeneration to be deployed by the WMCA via the Single Commissioning Framework in the West Midlands be noted;
2. The potential for further devolution to the region from national government with the West Midlands and Greater Manchester being the only two areas specifically identified for 'Trailblazer Devolution Deals' in the White Paper be noted;
3. The possible Housing, Regeneration and Land proposals that the board would like to be considered for inclusion in future Trailblazer Devolution as discussed, specifically reflecting the key areas of focus for the Housing and Land Delivery Board including regeneration, public land, affordable housing and town centres be noted and

4. The formation of a 'task and finish' officer sub-group of Housing and Land Delivery Steering Group to inform and develop the proposals be noted.

52. Advanced Manufacturing in Construction (AMC) : Enabling Infrastructure for Delivery for AMC in the West Midlands

The board considered a report of the Strategic Planning Manager that provided an update on the regional picture for Advanced Manufacturing in Construction (AMC) which also highlighted the scale of the opportunity for the West Midlands.

The Strategic Planning Manager, Rob Lamond outlined the report that was submitted further to a discussion at the board meeting in March. The report set out the AMC route map, wider context and next steps for taking forward AMC and Future Homes Standard in an integrated way, establishing the West Midlands as an exemplar in this field.

The Chair reported of the need to make the region attractive for companies to be based in the West Midlands and for the WMCA to communicate its successes such Urban Splash, Icknield Port Loop.

Councillor Simkins noted the Brownfield Institute in Wolverhampton could assist with regards to AMC in the West Midlands.

The Executive Director of Housing and Regeneration reported that a strategy for AMC would bring together the region's wider housing, land and regeneration objectives that would be submitted to Government to secure more funding as part of the Trailblazing Devolution Deal. Further updates would be reported to future meetings.

Resolved:

1. The background regarding the WMCA's work to date with partners to develop the AMC Charter and route map (approved by the Housing and Land Delivery Board in November 2020) be noted and

2. The proposed next steps for work led by WMCA around AMC and the Future Homes Standard in the region, as set out in section 4.2 of the report, to establish the West Midlands as a national leader for this agenda be endorsed.

53. WMCA Housing Deal 2018 : Local Plans Progress Update

The board considered a report of the Strategic Delivery Advisor that provided an update on the monitoring of local plans in the region which is a formal requirement in the WMCA's 2018 Housing Deal with Government.

The Strategic Delivery Advisor, Amanda Holland outlined the monitoring process, progress on the housing land supply, progress on local plans and how the WMCA can provide support to local authorities based on the agreed deliverables for the Housing and Land Portfolio.

Councillor Simkins reported of the need to ensure land for housing and employment are aligned and the need for collaborative with Shire Authorities.

The Chair reported of the need for strategy to bring forward land.

Councillor Pemberton reported that Stratford Council has a core strategy that is housing led and it would be interesting to find out what other local authorities are doing to provide an overarching view.

The Chair concurred with the views expressed and the need to look at the local plans of the 7 Constituent Authorities along with the immediate Shires to provide an overview of every local authority.

The Executive Director of Housing and Regeneration reported that a status update of every local plan would be in the next report and he would look at where we are across the region with regards to employment land. He added that he would link with Councillor Brookfield's portfolio to provide an overview of employment land alongside employment trends for the region.

Chris Lawes (Coventry and Warwickshire LEP) also considered it would be helpful to consider employment land losses as part of this work.

Councillors Simkins and Kettle also reported of the need to look at industrial land alongside the Industrial Strategy.

Resolved:

1. The WMCA's responsibilities relating to the monitoring of local plans and required assurance reports to Government, how this relates to the 2018 Housing Deal and Brownfield funding packages, progress towards achievement of the 215,000 new homes target in the Housing Deal and progress towards the delivery of local plans be noted and

2. The types of additional support and advice that could be provided by the WMCA which would be beneficial to local authorities seeking to progress local plans, development delivery and related policy development be noted.

54. WMCA Housing & Land Delivery Board Taskforces : Progress Update

The board considered a report of the Strategic Delivery Advisor that provided an update on activities of the WMCA taskforces which support the Housing and Land Portfolio which provide vital industry insight, challenges and steers across its diverse range and programmes.

Resolved:

1. The positive work and contributions to date of the industry-led taskforces established by WMCA under its Housing and Land Delivery Board be noted;

2. The current roles, responsibilities and activities of the industry-led taskforces established by the WMCA under its Housing and Land Delivery Board be noted and

3. The suggestions for future programmes of activity of the taskforces be endorsed.

55. Local Transport Plan Consultation : Opportunities for Housing & Land Portfolio

The board considered a report of the Strategic Delivery Advisor that provided an update on the development of a new West Midlands Local Transport Plan along with an update on the recent engagement on the new Local Transport Plan Core Strategy.

Resolved:

1. The proposed approach and progress on development of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP) and the development of Area Strategies in partnership with West Midlands local authorities be noted.

56. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Resolved:

That in accordance with Sections 100A4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

57. Appendix 1 to Quarterly Report -Single Commissioning Framework Schemes

The board considered an appendix to the Quarterly Housing and Land Portfolio Deliverables report that provided an update on Single Commissioning Framework Schemes.

Resolved: The report be noted.

58. Appendix 2 to Quarterly Report -Performance on Devolved Housing & Land Funds -Dashboards

The board considered an appendix to the Quarterly Report on the Housing and Land Portfolio Deliverables that reported on the performance of the Devolved Housing and Land Fund Dashboards.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 11.45 am.